



# CONGRESSMAN DAN LUNGREN

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Dear Friend,

By now you've probably heard the stir about big prizes driving innovation in energy and other areas. The X Prize Foundation, one of the most prominent prize organizations, first awarded a \$10 million prize for the first private spacecraft capable of carrying three people to above the earth's surface. Recently the X Prize Foundation announced that it will award \$10 million to the first 100 mile-per-gallon car which then wins a race against other green cars.



In this regard, rising fuel costs, coupled with continued unrest in oil-producing nations served as the impetus for a bill I introduced on March 9, 2007: the New Options Petroleum Energy Conservation Act of 2007, or NOPEC. NOPEC would reduce our dependence on foreign oil by providing incentives for greater fuel efficiency in addition to alternate energy sources. One of the more innovative elements of the bill is the creation of a \$1 billion prize to the first automobile manufacturer incorporated in the United States to successfully manufacture a midsize sedan that operates on gasoline and can travel 100 miles per gallon.

↓ Article Continues Below ↓

## Survey: Paying Less at the Pump

Please take a moment to provide your views on this important issue.

### Are gas prices too high?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

### What do you think Congress should do about it?

**Submit & Join**

\*By answering this survey, you are subscribing to my newsletter

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## Upcoming Town Halls!

**March 25, 2008**

**7:00pm - 8:30pm**

Elk Grove City Hall  
City Council Chambers  
8401 Laguna Palms Way  
Elk Grove, CA 95758  
Click [here](#) for a map of this location.

**March 27, 2008**

**7:00pm - 8:30pm**

Rancho Cordova City Hall  
American River Room  
2729 Prospect Park Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670  
Click [here](#) for a map of this location.

## E-MAIL UPDATES

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## Please Feel Free to Tell a Friend

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There is a long history connecting important inventions with prize money. As Amory Lovins and E. Kyle Datta point out in *Winning the Oil Endgame*, the 1927 Orteig Prize for aviation was awarded to Charles Lindbergh for his flight over the Atlantic. In fact, the 1895 Great Chicago Car Race—relating to innovation rather than speed—played an important role in giving birth to the American automobile industry. Intuitively, this makes sense. Incentives to succeed tap into an aspect of human nature which brings out the best in people.

Competition for a prestigious prize is far more likely to get results than government programs aimed at anticipating and funding "winners." Although occasionally effective, federal subsidies are paid before an industry proves it can achieve what it set out to do, and all too often such subsidies are given to the well-connected, not the meritorious. But prize money is paid out only when the goal is achieved.

It could be argued that a proposal to perpetuate the consumption of oil, even at reduced levels, should not warrant federal beneficence. According to this logic, only ending our petroleum-based economy would justify governmental support. While one might agree with the ultimate objective of ending our reliance on oil, it is at the same time foolhardy to present the perfect as the enemy of the good. As Philip J. Deutch points out in the November/December 2005 issue of *Foreign Policy*, there are practical obstacles which stand in the way of this goal being achieved soon. Furthermore, reducing oil consumption is not in conflict with the development of alternative fuel sources. As an element of a larger policy mix, a reduction in our dependence on oil has a complementary role to play in attaining longer term policy objectives.

In fact, looking at average fleet-wide fuel economy, the introduction of automobile transportation at 100 miles per gallon translates into the ability to travel nearly 5 times a given distance on a tank of gas. Current automobile gasoline consumption levels of 8.9 million barrels per day could ultimately be replaced by a fleet of NOPEC vehicles which would reduce consumption to about 1.8 million barrels a day. Assuming a constant relationship between reduced gasoline consumption and carbon dioxide emissions, commensurate reductions in the level of auto pollution could also result from this modest proposal.

It is imperative that federal energy policy embody appropriate incentives to respond to the challenges which lie ahead in our energy future. The growth of both the Chinese and Indian economies presents the specter of rising global demand for oil. Political exigencies such as Venezuelan unrest, veiled supply disruption threats by Iran, and the attempted attack on the Saudi pipelines by al Qaeda should serve as a wake-up call to all of us.

The uncertainty concerning our energy future affects not only our economic "life-blood" but our national security as well. American national interests must be immunized from the dictates of a global petroleum cartel. We must not allow our potential energy vulnerability to become the "Achilles heel" of our status as a global superpower. Our ability to pursue our interests and promote our

values in the conduct of American foreign policy must not be encumbered by our petroleum dependency.

The good news is that we have arrived at a point of confluence where our energy, environmental, and national security interests all point to the need for a common solution. A new coalition ranging from Greens to those concerned with the national security threat posed by our oil addiction is now possible. The challenge before us transcends traditional ideological barriers and it is in this spirit that I offer a proposal which will hopefully contribute to a much needed rethinking of our national energy policy.

Sincerely,



Daniel E. Lungren  
Member of Congress

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Congressmen Lungren periodically sends e-mail newsletters to constituents of the 3rd District to inform them of issues before the Congress and provide generally helpful information. If you would like to unsubscribe, you are free to do so here. If you unsubscribe you will no longer receive Congressman Lungren's emails.

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